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inside spectator of the ducal or noble mansion. And they are quite right if they look at it as they look at the party-colored legs of the *guardia nobile* at Rome, as a curious and somewhat grotesque relic of a historical past, which deserves to be seen. Even in this case, however, they must always bear in mind a remark of Horace Walpole's which contained a profound social truth: "The most remarkable thing I have observed since I came abroad is that there are no people so obviously mad as the English. . . . If one could avoid contracting this queerness, it must certainly be most entertaining to live in England." The Saturday Reviewer, considering him as a type, has been struck like Walpole with the first of these facts, and if he succeeded in following Walpole's advice, and "avoided contracting that queerness," he would be less amusing than he now is.

5. — *Life of Thomas Jefferson*. By JAMES PARTON. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co. 1874.

FROM 1783 to 1801 is the most interesting period in our history. Six years were passed in making a "hoop for the thirteen staves"; and then came the struggle between the past and the future, — between the old English theory of government by the educated and the wealthy, and the new French doctrine of the sovereignty of that mysterious entity, the people; wise, virtuous, and infallible by divine right.

The men who dealt with these grave matters were men of conduct and of rare endowments; men who presented a large variety of types of character, and had each a distinct and yet visible existence of his own. This is true not only of the grand figures in the front rank, but also of the *Dii Minores*, like Burr, Fisher Ames, Barlow, Pinckney, Gerry, Rutledge; very different in this respect from the *fortis Gyas* and *fortis Cloanthus* class who occupy their places to-day.

It was our heroic age. The American Walter Scott, when he comes, cannot do better than to select this picturesque period for the great American novel that has so often been announced.

In the mean time Mr. Parton has made good use of the period in various monographs. His *Life of Aaron Burr*, in choice of incident, skilful arrangement, and lively narrative, is a model of its kind. It deserves the compliment paid by Dumas to Lamartine's *Girondins*; it is biography *élevée à la hauteur du roman*. Mr. Parton has not kept up to this standard of excellence in the *Life of Jefferson*, a republication from the "Atlantic Monthly." It may be said in his

behalf that when a man is condemned to the *travaux forcés de la littérature*, — *Anglice*, belongs to the chain-gang of a serial, — he can hardly be expected to get the same mastery of his subject, or to put the same finish in his work, as a writer who has his time and his tastes at his own disposal. This is true; but it does not excuse Mr. Parton for playing so often to the gallery with inflated rhetoric and spread-eagleism. We doubt if even the "gods" among his public were moved when they read that the Agricultural Society of France under Napoleon III. was "temporarily dishonored by the name of Imperial"; or were especially impressed by the magisterial bits of moralizing scattered here and there, like this on Tom Paine's convivial ways, which "lured him, perhaps, into habits that prevented his ripening into happiness and wisdom; for no man can attain welfare who does not obey the physical laws of his being"; or thought it in good taste to call the French negotiator in the X Y Z business "the head striker," or George III. "the hereditary Dunderhead," or to describe Galileo as "tried by tonsured savages," or to head a chapter with "Thomas Jefferson as a Sorehead." With the exception of the "Sorehead" these and many similar errors of taste have been allowed to reappear.

Equally reprehensible is the tone which Mr. Parton often adopts in speaking of the great characters he describes. Time has enabled us to see clearly in many places where our ancestors were groping and blundering in the dark. The historian writes as a superior being; but this advantage of birth does not warrant him in assuming a patronizing, half-contemptuous familiarity of manner towards those who were the best in their day. Even the shades of such men as Washington, John Adams, and Jay should be approached with respect. This kind of pertness, too common in daily journals, ought not to be admitted into books. Even in the republic of letters there must be some exclusiveness and distinction of classes. Let us pray that the newspaper reporter may be kept out of literature.

Mr. Parton has made the mistake as an artist of painting his angel all white and his devil all black. There are but two characters in his piece: Hamilton, the villain of the drama, the evil genius of America; and the godlike Jefferson, who overthrows him; and stands, all sweetness and light, upon his prostrate form, like St. Michael in Guido's picture. Mr. Parton's abuse of Hamilton is weakened by its exaggeration. He is "British Hamilton," "a limited and unwise man"; "excessively vain of his military prowess"; the "inevitable failure of a third-rate man in a first-rate place"; "a coarse assailant of a name hallowed by its association with the birthday of the

nation"; "a man whose history was a tissue of machinations against the liberty of a country which had not only received and given him bread, but heaped its honors upon him." "He can be acquitted of depravity only by conceding his ignorance and incapacity." His theory of government was "a means of curbing and frustrating the people's will." He opposed States rights because he was "born in a little sugar island, from which he had early escaped, and therefore unable to comprehend and sympathize with the hereditary love of the native citizen for the State in which he was born." And this is a reason given for his failure as a statesman: "I do not know enough of the laws of our being to explain the truth, but a truth it is, that the paramour of a Reynolds was never yet capable of founding a safe system for the guidance of a nation." "Immoral men may be gifted and amiable, but they are never wise." "He could be false to women for the same reason that he could disregard the will of the people. He did not look upon a woman as a person and an equal, with whom faith was to be kept, any more than he recognized the people as the master and the owner whose will was law. Original in nothing, he took his morals from one side of the Straits of Dover and his politics from the other." This kind of historical criticism is not very flattering to the intelligence and culture of Mr. Parton's readers.

Jefferson, on the other hand, is the perfect man,—great as a philosopher and a statesman; great in science, literature, music, and farming; the model husband, father, and friend. In the beginning of the century, one Abraham Bishop, of Connecticut, saw much in Jefferson's character and career that reminded him of Christ. Mr. Parton takes somewhat a similar view. "Jefferson," he says, "had few adherents among the rich and the educated. It is only the human race in general that is the gainer by the ideas of which he was the exponent." "Jefferson had more in him of that which makes the glory and hope of America than any other living creature known to us." Hero worship so unqualified naturally provokes contradiction. Rejecting as beneath notice all the stories of the "Black Sally" and "Atheist" class, let us consider what an *advocatus diaboli* might say in opposition to the proposed canonization of Jefferson.

Jefferson was kind in his home, and agreeable in society, in public life meaning on the whole to do what he believed to be right; a man to be envied for his sound health, his cheerful temperament, and his pre-eminent success. Jefferson and Franklin are among the very few men known to have expressed a willingness to lead the same life over again. Jefferson's serene self-complacency sometimes took on the

shape of a virtue. "His calumniators," he often said, "were not assailing him, but a being non-existent, of their own imagining, to whom they had given the name of Thomas Jefferson." But his own view of himself was quite as far from the real man as theirs. His sanguine disposition and his vanity made him feel sure that he was right. All was for the best, — at least, all that he did. His first impulse was to object to any measure which did not originate with himself, or had not been submitted to his judgment. Contradiction he could not bear; Opposition of any kind produced a bitter feeling that corroded his judgment of his adversaries and of their partisans. In France, Gouverneur Morris remarked that he was too fond of calling people fools when they did not agree with him. Throughout his life, Jefferson's opinions on most subjects were influenced by his feelings more than he dreamed of. Mr. Parton calls him "the man of feeling," as opposed to Hamilton, "the man of action." This radical weakness, a natural tendency to exaggeration in expression, and a fondness for antithetical and inflated rhetoric, led him to say many foolish things. He was a great phrase-maker, and loved the "jingling of formulas," like any second-rate French philosopher. Phrases were to him an argument, a proof, or an excuse, as the occasion might require. He fed his mind with them to the end. When an old man, several thousands of dollars were raised in New York and Philadelphia to relieve his wants. He accepted the gift with alacrity, saying, by way of apology for taking the money, "No cent of this is wrung from the tax-payer. It is the pure and unsolicited offspring of love."

His residence in France at the beginning of the great Revolution stimulated this infirmity. He talked the same wild stuff as the French radicals. "Were there but an Adam and Eve left in every country and that free, to repopulate it, it would be better than as it now is." "Rather than it (the Revolution) should have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated." He believed that the French had discovered the philosopher's stone of social science, and that misery, sin, and ignorance were to be transmuted once and for all into virtue, happiness, and light. The recipe was so simple: take all the kings, aristocrats, and priests, kill them, and confide in the virtue and wisdom of the people. He dreamed, as they did, of elementary principles, social compact, natural rights of man, and the like *ignes fatui* of politics. He felt certain, as they did, of the truth of *à priori* deductions from what they called Pure Reason, of which the pasteboard and plaster goddess they set up and worshipped was a fit emblem. Congreve described reason better: —

“ Reason, the power
To guess at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp
Of wandering life that winks and wakes by turns,
Fooling the follower ’twixt shade and shining.”

There may have been some excuse for vagaries in the electrified atmosphere of France ; but what is to be said of the wisdom of the American who brought all these windy phrases home with him and tried to naturalize them, as if they were to work some wonderful and useful change in the only country where genuine liberty flourished, where “ tyrants and despots,” whether “ banded,” or “ impious,” or “ bloody,” had never existed ; where, if to be “ people ” was to be “ wise and virtuous,” all were wise and virtuous. He forgot having told his French friends that in America “ the poorest laborer stood on equal ground with the wealthiest millionaire ” ; and that “ of distinction by birth or body, our people had no more idea than they had of the mode of existence in the moon and planets.” But as in the old story of the shipment of warming-pans to the West Indies, the pans found a ready sale as dippers in the sugar-mills, so these canting phrases, utterly out of place in America, were eventually found useful as a means of flattering the lower classes, and of winning their votes. Some of them are yet in use and in tolerable repair, and go largely to make up stump-speeches. We still hear of the virtue of the people, as if we were not all of us the people, and of the wisdom of public opinion, as if the majority of mankind had the time, the temper, or the ability to get at the truth ; and still “ the future of human freedom depends upon our success in government.”

Jefferson made some excellent deductions from “ reason.” He hated paper currency and national banking, and he objected to bounties for the encouragement of particular manufactures. He held that the “ general government should be as small a thing as it can be without sacrifice of its efficiency ” ; “ a few plain duties to be performed by a few servants ” ; “ reduced to foreign concerns only.” On the other hand, he extracted from the same original source many theories that have led to mischief, of whose truth he felt equally sure ; for pure reason and his reason were identical in his mind, just as, when he professed “ entire faith in human nature,” he meant the human nature of the anti-Federal party ; the human nature of the Federalists being of the fallen kind, totally perverse and corrupt. He argued for an elective judiciary ; thought rebellion necessary to the health of a free country as a corrective or a cathartic ; was in favor of taxing the rich only, and always insisted that one generation had no right to bind those succeeding to it. Constitutions ought to

become null and void, and the public debt to be wiped out at the end of whatever period should be ascertained to be the average duration of human life after the age of twenty-one. A corollary of this was, that dwelling-houses should be built to last only one generation. He introduced rotation in office; in the next generation it had grown to the shape of Governor Marcy's cynical definition, "To the victors belong the spoils." It has debased public life and given a flavor of knavery to the word "politician." And Jefferson is the author of the Kentucky Resolutions, "the bill of rights of nullification," as Calhoun called them, and, we may add, of secession. Jefferson Davis only carried out the doctrines of his namesake to the logical end.

Jefferson was a clever party manager. He saw the drift of popular government in this country, and placed himself at the head of the movement. But he was not a great statesman. He never fairly raised himself above Virginia politics; his views beyond were distorted by his dislike of New England, the *Vendée* of America, as his followers called it in their Frenchified jargon. What happened under Jefferson would have happened under any man sooner or later. Hamilton knew what was coming, but he was a statesman, who tried to mitigate the evils he foresaw. He was no monarchist; he was opposed to the tyranny of the majority, — a form of "banded despotism" Jefferson had not thought of. "Alas!" exclaims Mr. Parton, "he did not foresee the Manhattan Island of 1871." Hamilton had a dim, prophetic view of it. The Federalists can show, as the result of their twelve years of power, a great nation created and consolidated by judicious management, credit instead of bankruptcy, prosperity in the place of ruin. What are Jefferson's titles? He added Louisiana to the Union, and paid a high price for territory we must soon have had for nothing. Napoleon boasted of having received so large a sum "for what he had not got and might not be able to keep for twenty-four hours." Preble administered "a well-deserved chastisement to the Barbary pirates," but against Jefferson's express instructions. He hoped that "time and a more correct estimate of interest would produce justice in their minds." Even the Leander outrage did not ruffle this meekness of spirit which Mr. Parton praises as "rising superior to the pagan virtue of prompt resentment of injuries." And yet Jefferson bitterly opposed the Jay Treaty in Washington's time, when to reject it meant war and ruin to the unfledged nation, with the seven frontier posts in the enemy's hands. In this matter Mr. Parton himself condemns him: "Posteriority's verdict is, that a President of the United States has seldom done an act more

difficult, more wise, or more right than the ratification of the Jay Treaty of 1794." The finances were also a vital question in the beginning. Jefferson's one idea on that subject was to oppose Hamilton. He never could or would understand funding the debt. He said that "Hamilton had purposely complicated the finances"; "the funds were a contrivance invented for the purposes of corruption." He maintained that the holder of certificates should receive from the government only the price he had bought them for, — a vulgar form of repudiation which has made its appearance again. Was a ruler of Americans very wise, whose especial aversion was merchants; who hoped the period was remote when many of his countrymen would be employed in manufactures; who thought the Supreme Court dangerous to freedom; the Cincinnati "lowering over the land"; a monarchy imminent; who represented himself struggling against a wicked aristocracy, and proclaimed liberty in danger and only to be preserved by "unremitting labor and perils" and by frequent rebellions? The truth is that there was no special strength in Jefferson's character or mind. He had an eager curiosity to know something of all that was going on in the world; he dabbled in *omne scibile* of his day, but he studied nothing thoroughly. He soon tired of a subject and turned to another. He was a smatterer of the dangerous kind who feel that they have arrived at truth. Believing firmly in his intuitions, revelations of reason, he never knew when the oracle was *medizing*. When he changed his mind he rearranged his principles or invented new ones. Were he living now, he would be a "sentimentalist," with remedies for the cure of all our troubles deduced from "principles of the purest morality and benevolence"; a visionary, impracticable, and mischievous; an uncompromising reformer and a philanthropest. He would advocate total abstinence and woman's rights, talk with Mill of the "unearned increment of land," harangue against capitalists and in favor of the eight-hour law, and insist upon the justice of paying off United States bonds in greenbacks, "the best currency the world has ever seen." There was also a strong dash of the frivolous, not to say foolish, in him. He objected to the use of Mr. and Mrs., and of petty titles like Deacon; "the small lingering absurdities of the feudal system," Mr. Parton calls them. He had also constitutional scruples against appointing days for fasting and prayer; and he proposed for the new territories such names as Chersonesus, Assenisipia, Metropotamia, and Pelispia, some of them inventions of his classical fancy.

His was not a progressive mind. Length of days did not teach him the folly of dogmatism in social and political questions. In his

old age, excited by the sermons of Dr. Channing, he "trusted that there was not a young man now born in the United States who will not die an Unitarian." And nine days before his death he shouted his old war-cry, "All eyes are opened or are opening to the rights of man." His sanguine temperament cheered him and misled him to the end.

Hamilton hit the mark when he said that "Jefferson had a womanish attachment to France, and a womanish resentment against Great Britain." Jefferson followed up his schemes with the headlong eagerness of women. Like them he had plenty of reasons, often illogical and inconsistent, for doing as he wished, and was sometimes not too scrupulous as to the means he adopted to attain his object. And like them he abused the privilege, generally granted to the sex, of changing their mind. Mr. Parton says, "it is permitted to every man to change his mind." No doubt. Time and experience act upon the views of men of sense; but is it usual for sensible men to hold and to express diametrically different opinions on almost every important question they have had to deal with? This, however, was the case with Jefferson. To begin with the most important. In early life he thought slavery wrong morally and economically, and said so openly and everywhere. His zeal began to cool when a new view of the advantages of the system sprang up in the South. Chasteleux asked permission to publish a translation of the "Notes" in France. Jefferson consented, provided that all passages relating to slavery should be omitted. Thenceforth he ignored the claims of the American black man to a share in the "natural rights of mankind," thought him an inferior being, and left his case "to an overruling Providence." The prohibition of the importation of slaves after 1808 was not opposed by the planters, because it would increase the price of the home-made article. Jefferson could safely approve of it, and he did so with his usual warmth. With that exception, he was silent on the subject while President. When the irrepressible controversy broke out again on the admission of Missouri, he took the Southern side. Opposition to the extension of slavery was insincere, a mere device of party, an election trick. He was for making a slave State of Missouri. It would increase the comfort of the slaves, without adding one to their number; it would even improve their chances for emancipation. It would also help Virginia, by enabling her to export her excess of negroes, and perhaps in time to dispose of them all. And also in minor matters his opinions veered with his feelings. Measures that seemed praiseworthy to him when a private citizen appeared pernicious to the Secretary of State or to the President. In Paris

Jefferson had recommended the English form of government to Lafayette as the best existing ; a few years later his most violent accusation against the Federalists was their preference for the English form. Admiration for France was then an essential article of the Democratic creed ; but when France sided with Spain in the dispute on the boundary line between Louisiana and Florida, Jefferson took offence, and proposed to Madison an alliance with England against Spain. His plan was to seize the Floridas and send out cruisers against the commerce of Mexico. Cuba he thought would probably add herself to our Confederation. Madison was wiser, and objected. Six months later, Jefferson accused John Randolph, who had deserted the party, of holding the intolerable heresy of a league with England.

Jefferson objected to the new Constitution of 1789 that it contained no provision for the "eternal and unremitting force of the Habeas-Corpus Act," and for the freedom of the press. When Burr was arrested, Jefferson wished to suspend the Habeas-Corpus Act, and had a bill to that effect passed by one branch of Congress ; it was lost in the other. Once in the security of private station, he got off this characteristic antithesis : "If I had to choose between a government without newspapers and newspapers without a government, I should prefer the latter" ; but when, in his turn, he was made to feel the incessant pricking of the quills which, with his connivance, had goaded even Washington out of his self-control, he could not help saying, that "a suspension of the press would not more completely deprive the nation of its benefits than is done by its abandoned prostitution to falsehood." So, too, the Sedition Law, when Adams was President, was entirely unconstitutional ; when Jefferson succeeded to the throne, he pardoned all who had been convicted under it, and presented Callender, who had libelled Mr. Adams, with fifty dollars. Before his own term of office was over, he attacked the Federalists with impeachments and libel suits.

Jefferson had said, "The sea is the field on which we should meet our European enemy." "We can always have a navy as strong as the weaker nation." But when the New-Englanders, those bitter Federalists, who lived by foreign trade, wanted a fleet to protect their merchantmen, he took a strong dislike to the naval service, condemned the use of the navy by Mr. Adams, and proposed to sell the public armed vessels. Finding, however, that the maritime tastes of the nation were too strong for him, he hit upon the plan of a land navy as the nearest approach to no navy. He devised a fleet of gunboats, to be hauled out of the water and kept under sheds until wanted. This amphibious scheme was too much even for his followers. He

was forced to send a squadron against the Barbary pirates; but he ordered the officer in command not to overstep the strict line of defence, and to make no captures. Preble, who had no constitutional scruples, settled the question of an American navy in spite of him.

He was once opposed to immigration. He said that foreigners, coming as they did from absolute monarchies, would either bring with them the principles imbibed in early youth, or else go too far in the opposite direction. "It would be a miracle they were to stop precisely at the point of temperate liberty." It would be better for the nation to grow more slowly, and have a more "homogeneous" population. Words of wisdom! but when he found that the newcomers all voted the Democratic ticket, he proposed shortening the term of the naturalization laws from fourteen years to five. In 1785 he went abroad to negotiate commercial treaties with all Europe. He talked even of opening a market in the neighboring colonies by force. Later he advised his countrymen to abandon the sea, and let other nations carry for us. He objected to internal improvements, and he sanctioned the Cumberland road. His excellent principle of strict construction of the Constitution did not prevent him from buying Louisiana. He made the Russian mission for his friend Short, although he had repeatedly declared that the public business abroad could be done better with fewer and with cheaper ambassadors. Toleration he always earnestly preached; but when he was interested in the University of Virginia, he wrote: "In the selection of our law professor we must be rigorously attentive to his political principles." And, to close this long list of somersets of opinion, although in a public address he had stated that he considered it a moral duty never to engage in a game of chance, or to subscribe to a lottery, he petitioned the Legislature of Virginia for permission to dispose of a farm he could not sell by a raffle; and in his petition he gave a catalogue of his public services as a reason why his request should be granted. Bulwer once said, "Money is character," meaning not exactly that "an empty bag cannot stand upright," as Franklin put it, but that a man who always spends more than his income, and is financially out at the elbows, must be deficient in "character." This was Jefferson's condition. He indorsed for his friends; they eat him out of house and home. He had to sell his library, and put his land up in a lottery. He lived habitually beyond his means, although he "kept a minute account of his expenses with scrupulous care." Agriculture, which he really liked, if we can believe his repeated protestations, he did not understand. He mismanaged his plantations; and year by year ruin and decay grew upon him. He died insolvent.

Mr. Parton has written again and again: "Never was the downfall

of a party more just or more necessary than that of the Federalists." "Nearly every important thing they did was either wrong in itself, or done for a wrong reason." His unconscious admissions confute his sweeping condemnation. He says in his Preface: "In France the politics with which he (Jefferson) was in the warmest sympathy resulted in organized massacre and fell Bonaparte; and the party which he led in the United States issued at the South in armed rebellion, and in some portions of the North in the rule of the Thief." Thus, then, was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophets of the Federal party. Again: "It was a Federal doctrine that intelligence and virtue must rule"; and we are asked to note "that Jefferson wished to bring in the whole intelligence and virtue by suffrage." Was the Jeffersonian plan of carrying out this sound Federal doctrine judicious? Here is Mr. Parton's answer: "We must now accept it as an axiom that universal suffrage, where one third of the voters cannot read the language of the country they inhabit, tends to place the scoundrel class at the summit of affairs." We may remark that the Federalists would be much too wise to imagine, as Mr. Parton does, that it would improve matters to include women in the poll list. In another place we read: "Let it be noted that the first Democratic administration paid homage to the higher attainments of man, and sought aid from the class furthest removed from the uninstructed multitude." Mr. Parton dislikes the "uninstructed multitude." He objects to Hamilton's qualification of \$1,000 for voters, but is in favor of a reading-and-writing test. The money test is a rough and simpler way of arriving at the same result. Hamilton's bank meets with Parton's sternest censure, as a great engine of corruption; but he speaks of our national-bank system, an overpowering aggregate of engines of that kind, as "a most exquisite device of finance." Hamilton himself he consigns to the bottomless pit, although he admits "his honesty and disinterested conviction"; praises "his tact, forethought, and fertility in organizing the Treasury system," — always the object of Jefferson's attacks. He also tells us that "Hamilton was flattered ceaselessly by the bar, the bench, the college, the dining-room, pulpit, and bureau"; in other words, that all the learning, culture, experience of life and of business, all the wealth and respectability of the country, were on his side. Hamilton might plead these extenuating circumstances in mitigation of the harsh sentence of his judge.

Mr. Parton has certainly not found the key to those interesting times. He shows no grasp of his subject. We have a series of clever pictures more or less in the style of the period, but the history of those days is still to be written.